

## MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

### WEST VALLEY FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) is developing a new Regional Transportation Plan for the MAG region. As part of this effort, MAG conducted a series of focus groups to identify and document transportation issues and concerns. The focus groups were held throughout the Valley to capture ideas from geographically and ethnically diverse groups of participants. The findings will assist MAG in identifying regional values, goals, and objectives that will guide the development of the Regional Transportation Plan.

The format of the Focus Groups included an opportunity for interactive discussion among participants, as well as a voting exercise that provided insight on priorities. To help structure the process, the discussions were organized into five topics areas. The topics included:

- ✖ Demographic and Social Change;
- ✖ The New Economy;
- ✖ Environmental and Resource Issues;
- ✖ Land Use and Urban Development; and
- ✖ Transportation and Technology.

Participants were encouraged to provide their own issues and concerns that related to each topic, both individually and in a round-table discussion. The responses received were documented in essentially a “verbatim” format so that the message intended by the participant was accurately conveyed.

The results of the **West Valley Focus Group** are attached. This material has been divided into three parts as follows:



**Part I. Key Focus Group Issues:** In Part I, the key issues identified at the West Valley Focus Group are listed by topic area. These issues are those voted by the participants to be the top two concerns in each topic area. Due to ties, certain topics may have more than two issues listed.

**Part II. Comprehensive Listing of Participant Issues:** In Part II, all the issues identified by the individual participants are listed. These issues have been grouped by topic area.

**Part III. Roundtable Discussion Comments:** In Part III, the results from a roundtable discussion are listed. These comments were recorded when all the focus group attendees participated in a general discussion of issues prior to voting on the top issues in each topic area.

If you have any questions or comments on the focus group process or the attached results, please contact Roger Herzog, MAG, at 602-254-6300 or [rherzog@mag.maricopa.gov](mailto:rherzog@mag.maricopa.gov).



## WEST VALLEY FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

### PART I. KEY FOCUS GROUP ISSUES

The participants of the West Valley Focus Group were given the opportunity to vote on their top two issues in each of the five topic areas. The two issues receiving the most votes are listed under each topic. Due to ties, certain topics may have more than two issues listed.

#### *DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE PRIMARY ISSUES*

- ✕ Public transit, especially light rail.
- ✕ Peoria needs Grand Ave. to be made into a freeway – one that runs from Phoenix to Sun City Grand.

#### *THE NEW ECONOMY PRIMARY ISSUES*

- ✕ Technical change.
- ✕ Correlation between targeted industries for economic development and infrastructure needs.

#### *ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES PRIMARY ISSUES*

- ✕ Recreation areas need to be set aside now, so they don't get overrun by developers.
- ✕ Air quality has to be a top priority.

#### *LAND USE AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT PRIMARY ISSUES*

- ✕ Transit-oriented activity centers.
- ✕ Peoria is a bedroom community and as such should be part of a major or regional transit system.
- ✕ Planned mixed-use communities.



## PART I. FOCUS GROUP ISSUE IDENTIFICATION SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

### *TRANSPORTATION AND TECHNOLOGY PRIMARY ISSUES*

- ✖ Advanced freeway planning (computerized?)
- ✖ Consider setting aside land in the far NW valley for a second major airport. Start with air freight.

## PART II. COMPREHENSIVE LISTING OF PARTICIPANTS' ISSUES

The following is a comprehensive listing of the issues/concerns that individual participants of the West Valley Focus Group identified as their concerns under each topic.

### DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE ISSUES

- ✖ Increase in regional population due to aging, immigration and relocation.
- ✖ Aging of population and impact on neighborhoods.
- ✖ [Increased] demand for public transit – rail and bus.
- ✖ School construction at time of housing development instead of after the fact.
- ✖ Public transportation that people use and [that] goes to areas of employment.
- ✖ Provision of social services for the infirm and disadvantaged.
- ✖ Provision of affordable housing (this includes all socioeconomic groups).
- ✖ Integration of growing minority population into current socioeconomic profile.
- ✖ Transportation for those who cannot afford buying and maintaining cars.
- ✖ Must have public transportation that will work for the average citizen.
- ✖ Need for extended public transportation to the NW Valley.
- ✖ Senior growth will continue to put pressure on infrastructure in NW Valley.



#### DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE ISSUES (CONTINUED)

- ✗ Less “affordable housing” as development moves north.
- ✗ Deterioration of older neighborhoods [needs to be addressed].
- ✗ “Us” vs. “them” divisions in a city [needs to be addressed].
- ✗ Increased demand for public transit w/o ability to fund it regionally.
- ✗ [Need to improve] quality of life – increasing population.
- ✗ [Need to address] transportation needs of an aging population.
- ✗ [Need] alternatives to driving.

#### THE NEW ECONOMY ISSUES

- ✗ More competition for regional employment centers.
- ✗ Overabundance of service industry jobs.
- ✗ Valley wide cooperation to bring employers.
- ✗ Emphasis on tech education and retraining into tech fields.
- ✗ [Need to] de-emphasize call centers.
- ✗ Planning for how a information-based economy will impact regional transportation.
- ✗ Schism between higher-paid, knowledge-based jobs and lower-paid production jobs, and impact on transportation needs.
- ✗ Technology infrastructure is critical.
- ✗ Tourism will “discover” the NW valley in an increasing way.
- ✗ Need to have an effort to lure quality jobs to the NW valley.
- ✗ Peoria needs better paying jobs.
- ✗ Farms are nearly all gone/need to be replaced with service jobs.
- ✗ Need engineering firms in our area.
- ✗ Need more professional people to set up offices in clusters.



### THE NEW ECONOMY ISSUES (CONTINUED)

- ✗ Need for technologically current employment.
- ✗ Corporate consolidation – requires new neighborhood/government partnership.
- ✗ Modernize education system to help children thrive in New Economy. This includes retraining existing workforce.
- ✗ [Need to] provide basic backbone infrastructure.
- ✗ Public policy (tax structure etc.) needs to address the e-business etc.
- ✗ Need to be a knowledge exporter, not an importer.
- ✗ Tourism will be less dominant as we go forward.
- ✗ Composition of projected work force, prepare for.

### ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES ISSUES

- ✗ Air quality improvement including much better dust control.
- ✗ Perhaps a ban on some more pollen-producing plants.
- ✗ Too much hopscotch development – give incentive for infill projects.
- ✗ Negative environmental impact with a booming population.
- ✗ Park/open space set aside.
- ✗ Open space preservation – conservation should be among our highest priorities.
- ✗ Air and water quality should be dealt with, with few compromises.
- ✗ Water supply is adequate – now focus on transportation, allocation and pricing.
- ✗ [Need] land use planning.
- ✗ [Need] air quality improvement.
- ✗ Recreational opportunities and open space.
- ✗ Increasing “un-funded mandates,” Cepa, etc.
- ✗ [Need to address] land subsidence/aquifer drowning.



### ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES ISSUES (CONTINUED)

- ✖ Paper/legal water.
- ✖ [Need to address] air quality improvements restrictions.
- ✖ Growth plans (Growing Smarter, etc.).
- ✖ [Need to address] energy availability.
- ✖ Air – must be improved.
- ✖ Need parks/entertainment close to home.
- ✖ Planned communities to reduce travel requirements.
- ✖ Water is a precious resource. We must not waste it.
- ✖ One-third of Peoria will require purchase of water to develop.
- ✖ Environmental uses (wash, open space PM, etc.) will cause increased cost to developers/cities.

### LAND USE AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

- ✖ Transportation, education and delivery of social services should be focal point of government.
- ✖ Infrastructure improvements should be regional and community character almost entirely local.
- ✖ Prioritize transportation improvements based on efficiency.
- ✖ Continue to focus on land use issues such as county lot splits, open space, funding etc.
- ✖ General plans are good but don't have major consideration for transportation hubs.
- ✖ Schools need modification if older than 30 years.
- ✖ Land use restrictions and existing infrastructure limit development of adequate transportation systems.
- ✖ Need improved mobility to central Phoenix for continued urban development.
- ✖ Can funding for infrastructure be obtained via the public?
- ✖ Roads must be completed – stop the zig-zag from two to four lanes.
- ✖ Public trails – bike paths along New River connecting all the cities along.



### LAND USE AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT ISSUES (CONTINUED)

- ✖ Infrastructure needs to be improved.
- ✖ Flood control measures are needed in some areas.
- ✖ [Need] innovative multi-family housing.
- ✖ Open space issues of development requires longer commutes.
- ✖ Plan now for the year 2040.
- ✖ Extend light rail in the Grand Ave. corridor to the NW valley.
- ✖ Leave open space for trails – support New River recreational corridor.
- ✖ A regional governmental body should look at the total picture, not planning by each city alone.
- ✖ [Need to sustain] mountain preserves.
- ✖ Planned light density urban centers.
- ✖ [Need to develop] regional employment centers.
- ✖ Upgrade/expand existing infrastructure.

### TRANSPORTATION AND TECHNOLOGY ISSUES

- ✖ Funding for new regional freeways is needed as growth goes west.
- ✖ Regional funding for transit is needed versus city by city.
- ✖ Bus or rail system to reduce traffic along Grand Ave.
- ✖ [Need to develop] bus or rail system that senior citizens and handicapped are comfortable using.
- ✖ [Develop an] airport for Peoria?
- ✖ Funding for infrastructure (roads, rail, etc.).
- ✖ [Need to improve] public transit.
- ✖ [Need a] reliever airport.
- ✖ [Need to build] general aviation airports.





#### TRANSPORTATION AND TECHNOLOGY ISSUES (CONTINUED)

- ✖ Need to put more money in transportation solutions to avoid congestion and degradation of lifestyle.
- ✖ Focus on alternative and choose solutions for Sky Harbor capacity issues.
- ✖ Leverage technology to ease commuting issues (home office, telecommuting etc.).
- ✖ Commercial air travel – additional airports [are needed].
- ✖ If Internet purchases grow, what will impact on state revenues be and how will infrastructure be affected?
- ✖ [Need to address] opportunities for telecommuting.
- ✖ Suburbs are not well linked now – will this worsen as metro area spreads?
- ✖ Freeway plans in the Valley have always failed to be adequate for growth.
- ✖ Have minimum of four lanes in each direction on freeways and make sure local roads are capable of handling the freeway exit traffic.
- ✖ Develop jobs, education, and services so that people can be served locally rather than driving across the metro area.
- ✖ If Luke AFB ever closes, jump on that land for a second airport.
- ✖ Encourage the growth of tele-working to relieve congestion growth.
- ✖ Live near employment mobility – plan to relocate?
- ✖ Growth limiting factor of congestion.
- ✖ [Need to address] home as workplace.
- ✖ Commercial air travel planning implementation.
- ✖ [Need to address] alternative fuels (sun?).



### PART III. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION COMMENTS

The following are issues that were identified by participants in an informal, roundtable forum. These issues reiterate those identified previously in this chapter.

- ✖ Planning for growth (303 connection in Anthem?).
- ✖ Does Yavapai County need to be a part of Phoenix?
- ✖ Planned development – way to go for future.
- ✖ Expanded freeways not answered to expanded growth.
- ✖ More people work at home.
- ✖ Arrowhead uses reclaimed water (more uses for reclaimed water).
- ✖ Telecommuting.
- ✖ New River – connector and recreational corridor (NW Valley).
- ✖ NW Valley – lack of connection between cities.
- ✖ Connection to 303 and 101.
- ✖ Future funding of transportation growth.
- ✖ Funding for transportation??
- ✖ Regional and statewide needs to handle social, economic, conservation, transportation needs.
- ✖ Freeways only “on-line” for five to seven years after built.
- ✖ Overall planning of streets and freeways behind.
- ✖ Lack of transportation infrastructure (behind other metropolitan areas.)
- ✖ What is growth pattern – seniors/tourism/employment.
- ✖ Funding? – Where will it come from?
- ✖ Peoria – existing core community aging/blight – need to pull people back to core.
- ✖ Need regional job centers.



### PART III. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION COMMENTS (CONTINUED)

- ✖ Need objective group for regional planning – transportation, technology, air quality.
- ✖ Air quality (children, people w/asthma).
  - People too reliant on vehicles
  - Need education for alternative transportation modes.
- ✖ Older people need alternative transportation modes.
- ✖ How to get people in and out of Lake Pleasant.
- ✖ Need airport in NW Valley.

